

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 ANKARA 002717

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR INR/R/MR, EUR/SE, EUR/PD, NEA/PD, DRL
JCS PASS J-5/CDR S. WRIGHT

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [TU](#)
SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT,
THURSDAY, MAY 13, 2004

THIS REPORT WILL PRESENT A TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER
THREE THEMES:

HEADLINES
BRIEFING
EDITORIAL OPINION

HEADLINES

MASS APPEALS
Zarkawi executioner of Nick Berg - Hurriyet
Zarkawi's revenge for abused Iraqis - Aksam
Decapitation shock in US - Milliyet
Bush: Killers aim to shake our will, they won't succeed -
Hurriyet
Private England: 'I was ordered to photograph abused Iraqis'
- Sabah
AKP hurries to pass 'Imam Hatip' bill - Milliyet
AKP, CHP duel on education reform bill - Sabah

OPINION MAKERS
Al-Qaida tape of decapitation worse than US torture of
Iraqis - Zaman
Nick Berg's father blames Bush - Cumhuriyet
Vatican: For Americans, abuse of Iraqis worse than 9/11 -
Radikal
High-ranking US commanders blamed for torture in Iraq -
Radikal
PM Erdogan against US sanctions on Syria - Zaman
PM Hariri: US Syria sanctions extremely disturbing for
Lebanon - Radikal
Speaker Arinc: Iraqis must join forces for a solution - Yeni
Safak
Intensive clashes in Karbala - Cumhuriyet
US planes continue bombing Karbala, 25 killed - Yeni Safak
Greek Cypriots open to new referendum, want changes to Annan
Plan - Zaman
Oil prices soar over \$40 - Yeni Safak

BRIEFING

Educational reform bill: The AK Party government sent the higher education reform bill to parliament on Wednesday amid criticism from the secularist groups, especially the military, that the legislation will increase the influence of Islam in education. The CHP has strongly criticized the bill, saying that proposed changes would undermine the secularist establishment. CHP leader Baykal blamed the AK Party for exploiting religion for the sake of political gains. The tensions over the education reform have spoiled Turkey's positive image abroad created by the passage of EU harmonization laws, says "Hurriyet." A US official said to "Hurriyet" on the condition of anonymity that Turkey should refrain from moves that can derail the country on its way to the EU. 'Secularism and democracy are traits that bring Turkey into conformity with Western values. Moves that might be seen as intervention in the democratic system or efforts to increase the role of religion in education and the overall regime will eventually hurt Turkey. Turkey must concentrate its energy on getting a date from the EU for full membership talks by the end of this year,' the US official reportedly said. On Wednesday, Land Forces Commander Gen. Aytac Yalman and the Aegean Army Commander Gen. Hursit Tolon voiced support for the TG S statement criticizing the education bill. Protests against the bill are gaining pace, with students to protest at parliament on Thursday and university staff to hold a silent protest at Ataturk's mausoleum on Friday.

Ankara on US sanctions on Syria; Israel: PM Erdogan on Wednesday criticized a decision by the US to impose sanctions on Syria, saying they would prove counterproductive. "I don't think embargoes are in accordance with human rights in this era. This approach does not help a solution but increases the problem. The way to peace and globalization is not through embargoes," PM Erdogan said during a joint news conference with the visiting Lebanese PM Rafik al-Hariri. Erdogan also said Israel's plan to withdraw unilaterally from Gaza, but retain most of its West Bank settlements, was "not right, nor aimed at a solution." Hariri urged Turkey to support a natural gas project that aims to carry Egyptian gas to Europe via Jordan, Lebanon and Syria.

AKP lawmakers criticize US, UK on Iraq: On Wednesday, deputy parliamentary speaker AKP lawmaker Sadik Yakut said US and Britain would be `drowned in the blood they have shed in Iraq.' The head of the Turkish-Syrian friendship group, AKP's Yuksel Cavusoglu, condemned at a press conference yesterday the abuse of Iraqi prisoners, and criticized the 'sadistic' acts of American soldiers. Such harsh statements have created a sensitive atmosphere on the eve of the May 17 Ankara visit of Britain's Tony Blair, say papers. PM Erdogan will pay a visit to England May 27-29.

Greek Cypriots not against a new referendum: A public opinion survey conducted by RAI Co. in south Cyprus on May 6-8 shows that 51 percent of the Greek Cypriots want the Annan Plan to be re-voted in south Cyprus if additional guarantees are given on the implementation and security issues, papers cite the Greek Cypriot daily "Politis." Only 29 percent have opted for restarting negotiations with the Turks without the Annan Plan. Turkish Cypriot leader Denktas said of the survey that Greek Cypriots had no right to force Turks into a new referendum. 'The Annan Plan is annulled since one of the sides has rejected it. But we are ready to hold talks with the Greek Cypriots under new conditions,' Denktas said.

EDITORIAL OPINION: Iraq

"Future of Iraq": Cengiz Candar noted in the conservative-sensational DB Tercuman (5/13): "Although there was some invalid US arguments about the Iraq war, such as the verification of WMD, the fact of the matter is that Saddam regime is completely over in Iraq, and this is a good thing. Brutal regimes like the Saddam regime should be erased from human history. The ideal solution was to have him toppled via internal forces, yet it did not happen. . Today the focus should be the future of Iraq rather than unnecessary debates about whether or not the war was justifiable. The US vision for Iraq, as stated from the beginning, is a democratic Iraq with territorial integrity. The formula to achieve this goal is a federal Iraq. The Abu Ghraib photos created a fatal blow against the American intentions, yet American vision for Iraq's future remains a valid as well as a legal goal. . The US should not abandon its policy of transferring authority to Iraqis. Transfer of authority must be coordinated with an election calendar. The US should also take steps toward fairness in the Israel-Palestine conflict, and urgently discard its 'pro-Israel' image. As for the Abu Gharib scandal, the US should make sure that the responsible persons, including the responsible political rank, receive severe punishment."

"Torture Overshadows the GME": Murat Yetkin wrote in liberal-intellectual Radikal (5/13): "The G-8 Foreign Ministers conference in Washington was originally designed to discuss the Greater Middle East Initiative. The US was expecting some contribution from EU members of G-8 as well as Russia, which would help prevent the GME from being labeled an 'American project.' This issue remains on the agenda of the conference. However, the Abu Ghraib scandal has become the number one priority item. The ministers of the G-8 will discuss at length the torture and abuse scandal, and also the future of Iraq, particularly after the transfer of authority on June 30. . There is still a major opportunity for international cooperation, not only for Iraq's future but also for the future of the Middle East, if Secretary Powell can bring a satisfactory plan for Iraq's future before the G-8 members."

"Bush's Chance For Re-Election": Yilmaz Oztuna commented in the conservative-mass appeal Turkiye (5/13): "The civilized world, which defends not only the human rights but also rights for every living creature, has every right to react to ongoing torture news. The spread of such disgusting crime among the US military,

which has a mission to bring peace to the world, is proof that the world will continue to suffer in this new era. Unfortunately, this issue is being evaluated in the US for its effects on the President's re-election possibilities. The President is the head of the executioners. He has great authority in every issue, including the use of the nuclear weapons. In return, he is the responsible authority for everything. The US elections will be held in six months time. Despite all the problems in Iraq, today's opinion is in favor of Bush's re-election because the Democratic Party's candidate is not very strong. Besides, Americans don't like to change presidents at a time of war. If you ask 'who is America's enemy, whom they are fighting with', you cannot get a standard answer to this question. But, it is clear that the torture accusations will create more enemies for the US. The only way for the US to get rid of these negative feelings is to punish the criminals for life."

EDELMAN